

MANSFIELD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

MINUTES – MARCH 9, 2023

The March 9, 2023 meeting of the Mansfield Township Environmental Commission was held at the Municipal Building and was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chair Paul Tarlowe, held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1976 and was followed by a Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Present were Paul Tarlowe, Kathleen Todd, Jim McMekin, Ann Bemis, and Ruth Panté; Glenn Todd was excused. Absent were Amanda Kilyk and Robert Jewel. Also in attendance was Township Committeeman Glen McGuinness.

MINUTES

No meeting was held in February. Mr. Tarlowe MOVED to accept and approve the minutes of January 12, 2023 meeting as corrected, seconded by Mr. McMekin. All in favor with an abstention by Ms. Bemis. The motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

Notice has been received of the installation of a new septic system on Jackson Valley Road by owner Susan Predl.

The Warren County Mosquito Commission indicates standard work is being undertaken to maintain control of mosquitoes in the county; operation will be within DEP permits.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

Meadows at Mansfield Wastewater Treatment Facility: Ms. Bemis asked who is responsible for this facility, and Mr. McGuinness explained it is the responsibility of the Homeowners Association. Ms. Bemis said houses under construction in the community are not yet inhabited. Approval had been given for 11 additional houses; approval for a higher number is being sought. Mr. McMekin reported inquiring of a worker when the work would be completed and was told that work is continuing for another 12 to 18 months until completion.

Pollinator Garden: Ms. Todd said Mansfield School has given permission for an on-site pollinator garden, to be constructed outside classrooms and under care by students. The art teacher has assumed responsibility for this action. Another garden is possible at Cafferata Park; Ms. Todd suggested a simple start for a garden at the park, beginning with seeds, not plants; watering at the park still must be considered. Members discussed the possibility of applying for a grant to help with expenses. Ms. Todd was asked to come up with a list of anticipated expenses such as plants.

Utilizing Facebook to inform residents of this endeavor and other activities of the commission is no longer possible as the town has taken down its page. In response to Mr. Tarlowe inquiring why it was taken down, Mr. McGuinness explained it was too expensive, in terms of the clerk's time responding to OPRA requests generated by social media posts.

Arbor Day: Mr. Tarlowe asked if we should consider scheduling an event; he offered to post on the community Facebook page that residents visit the Salem Oak Tree. Another suggestion was made to arrange for an event honoring Earth Day.

Bluebird Trail: Mr. Tarlowe reported Mr. Mershon will probably help with monitoring and banding the birds; the boxes are in good shape. Mr. Tarlowe asked Mr. McMekin if he would lead a walk, but the offer was declined. Mr. Tarlowe will arrange a walk when the birds are nesting.

Warehouse Zoning Ordinance: ANJEC has suggested all towns prepare an ordinance in accord with the town; Mr. McGuinness suggested contacting the Planning Board because an ordinance already exists.

Year-End Report: The prepared report was reviewed by members; it was MOVED by Ms. Panté to forward the report to the Township Committee, seconded by Ms. Todd. With no abstentions and no further comments, the motion carried.

Morris Canal: The Warren County Parks Foundation, of which Mr. Tarlowe is an active member, has been partnering with the Canal Society of NJ in developing the Morris Canal Greenway in Warren County. The Greenway in Mansfield is open to the public via the canal trail off Cherry Tree Bend Road and in the Port Murray Preserve which includes the inclined plane and turbine chamber. The Greenway is a project of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA).

Mr. Tarlowe plans to lead a hike at the Pequest fish hatchery which will be posted on the township website.

Musconetcong Watershed Association: The MWA is seeking support for “Watershed Resilience for Action Planning” to develop a comprehensive plan of activities in the watershed, an effort to coordinate all activities and improve recreational opportunities. Mr. Tarlowe MOVED for the Environmental Commission to endorse the letter of support entitled WRAP the Musconetcong, seconded by Ms. Panté. With no opposition, all in favor and the motion carried.

Mr. McMekin reported he attended the Zoom meeting of the Musconetcong River Management Council which works to implement the River Management Plan. Data on Hance’s Creek was reported, the readings were not good. The MWA seeks volunteers for its water quality monitoring efforts. An event later this month will gather samples from various areas.

Township Flea Market: Ms. Todd requested an e-mail letter of support for this event.

Road Salt: Mr. Tarlowe reported he is again participating in the MWA’s Road Salt Monitoring Project. He collects Musconetcong River data from five locations in the township before and after storm events when road salt is applied. Tests include conductivity, chloride concentration, and temperature.

Eagle Nest: Mr. Tarlowe said that Mr. Jewel reported an eagle nest opposite the Hayford Fish Hatchery.

It was MOVED by Mr. McMekin to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Panté, Secretary

Next meeting date:

April 13, 2023